9: Stadling--86-87 E-3 (1898) 1901 Yakut-1-2
116, 237, 433

"I have already spoken of the abundance of fish. The quantity of fur obtained, on the other hand, has grown smaller and smaller, the valuable sable having diminished greatly or entirely disappeared over wide regions, probably not only on account of the war of extermination carried on against it, but also because of the great forest fires, which annually lay waste hundreds of square miles. One of the natural resources of Yakutsk, which has been worked for ages, belongs to the extinct animal kingdom--namely, the valuable mammoth tusks. Middendorff calculated in the forties that, during the period of two hundred years previous to that time, the tusks of at least twenty thousand mammoths had been obtained in northern Siberia. At the present day, within the province of Yakutsk alone, about 17 tons of mammoth tusks are annually collected.

This does not, however, represent the total of the finds, [87] for numbers of them being decayed or cracked are left behind as valueless. It is only for a short time in the first part of the summer, when the spring floods have washed out the frozen earth in which the remains of this animal are buried, that the mammoth tusks can be gathered. Then the natives roam about far and wide searching the river-valleys and ravines where the floods have left fresh surfaces exposed, and gather in their crop. In consequence of the perennially frozen condition of the soil the floods wash out the earth more in a horizontal than a perpendicular direction, and from this cause these annual wash-outs often extend over a large area. The mammoth crop, then, may in a certain sense be said

to depend on the amount of rain and the weather in general during the spring. On the New Siberian Islands, on the other hand, it is the ice and the sea which make the tusks accessible to the collectors, by undermining and eroding the beach or cliffs; while sometimes, especially after heavy weather, they are thrown up on shore by the waves. The natives in the service of the merchants usually start over the frozen sea with their dogs and sledges for the islands in March, staying there all the summer and returning with their sledges loaded with ivory in the autumn, when the sea is again frozen. The mammoth crop on the islands is very greatly dependent on the winds. If, for example, protracted westerly weather prevails, the water rises very high, while during easterly storms it sinks, making a larger surface of cliff and beach accessible to the collector."

53: Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

skillfully made; the wooden crockery was usually decorated with carving, while the birchbark objects were decorated with horsehair designs. 322

Fur-dressing and tanning were very common. The materials were made into a great variety of different things—clothing, footwear, and headgear; carpets, underlays (usually made of horse- or cow-hide, often sewn together from pieces into a checkered mosaic), blankets (from horseskin); the leather vessels were made in a variety of sizes, ranging from the enormous simiir' for kumys down to the tiny pail or tursuk; various parts of saddles, straps, nooses and so on. The actual working of the leather and fur was very primitive—the hide was smoked (in ancient times and even in the 17th century this was done in earth stoves), crumpled, smeared with oil or cream, and there was no true tanning. The manufacture of reindeer suede was evidently learnt from the Evenks and the Evens. 281
The Yakuts themselves did not make any cloth, either from animal wool or vegetable fiber—and only used what was imported. They did not know about spinning, nor how to roll felt. On the other hand, horsehair was widely employed; it was used for the ornamentation of birchbark and other objects, particularly for braiding different kinds of lassoes, cord, laces and nets, loops, fans to keep flies away, stuffing pillows for saddles and so on. The Yakuts also wove horsehair for decorative purposes. The individual hairs were twisted into a thread by hand on a bare knee, without using a spindle. 286 283 439 531

Blacksmithery was the only trade among the Yakuts which had long acquired commercial importance, although normally it was not a separate trade from agriculture. In the 17th century the Russians found it to be highly developed among the Yakuts. The iron was obtained from marsh ore, of which there was a great deal, particularly on the Vilyuy. The ore was mined along the rivers Botoma, Amga, Sola and others. It was first smelted in primitive blast furnaces. But at the beginning of the 20th century the Yakut smiths were already working with imported iron. They forged it into a variety of implements and utensils, weapons and so on. Apart from iron, the Yakut smiths worked low-grade silver, which in the 19th and 20th centuries was partly obtainable by melting down Russian coins. This silver was made into various ornaments, linings for belts, whips, horse harnessing. The equipment used in the smithies was fairly unsophisticated—furnaces worked with bellows (portable), anvils, hammer and tongs. 326 [316]

The fact that they engaged in ceramics singles out the Yakuts from the people around them. They evidently retained pottery as a relic of the Neolithic stage. Nevertheless, it was very primitive. To the dark, viscous clay they used to add powder ground from old fired pots and then mold the clay mixture diluted with water into the walls of the pot with their hands (without a wheel), using a stone to smooth them out (on the inside) and a trowel (on the outside). The pots were fired in the hearth. The pottery varied in size and the shapes and designs were crude. In the last few decades, Yakut ceramics have been replaced by Russian ones. 323

Mammoth-ivory carving (Yakutiya is rich in mammoth skeletons), which was probably not begun before the 19th century, was not a common trade, although it was an interesting one. The ivory was carved into a variety of trinkets and small boxes. 321

These were the main types of production among the Yakuts prior to the Revolution. As a whole, the Yakut economy remained at a fairly low level of development, and by and large remained a subsistence economy. Nevertheless, the sale of homemade products acquired ever-greater importance towards the end of the 19th century. This was mainly the case 433 443

Nevertheless, the meadows and fisheries had already been taken over to The Yakuts

some extent by the toyons. The seizure of them was accompanied by a hard struggle since the communes resisted the toyon claims to their own land.

Such, in general terms, was the social structure of the Yakuts by the time the Russians arrived. Tsarist policy between the 17th and 19th centuries speeded up the development of social relations, so that Yakut society just before the October Revolution had already changed very much from what it had been three centuries ago. Nevertheless, many phenomena proved extremely stable and retained their archaic nature until recent times. Just before the Revolution the division of the Yakuts into strata according to the property they possessed was extremely marked. Most of the population did not even have enough cattle for the hunger norm (this norm, when the grade of the livestock was low, was considered to be two head of livestock per person), whereas in the few toyon households there were several dozen head of livestock per person. However, the unequal distribution of the livestock was by no means anything new for the Yakuts. But the question of land was different. The system which had grown up in the domain of land tenure was of comparatively recent origin. Since the arrival of the Russians in Yakutiya, the process of decomposition of the ancient communal-clan system of using the meadowland had been stepped up. The toyons were vigorously seeking to acquire the common lands. The development of private land ownership by the toyons continued to the 1760's, when certain measures introduced by the Russian administration gave it a new direction. In 1765, Yakuts were forbidden to buy or sell land, and in the next few years, through the activity of the Yakut Tribute Commission, the distribution of land in accordance with the so-called "sable" and "fox" taxes or parts of them was introduced among the Yakuts. Later on, in about 1820, this distribution of land assumed the form of the so-called "class system" of land usage, which legalized the extremely unequal distribution of the land, though, on the surface, it seemed to be something like common land usage. This "class system," which was later modified, had assumed the following form by the beginning of the 20th century.

The unit of measurement of land among the Yakuts was the "rick" (*кургуо*), a plot of land from which one hayrick could be mown (the size of the rick ranged from 10 to 30 cartloads, sometimes as many as 40 or 60). These allotments made up plots (*оҕуо*) which were extremely varied in size, depending on the "class," and there were three or four "classes." One first-class plot (*бастыг* or *уһаһан оҕуо*) was equal to two second-class plots (*орто оҕуо*) and three or four third-class plots (kenniki or *кэччигэй оҕуо*). The population was also divided into three or four classes: the toyon households belonged to the first class, and received a first-class plot, the middle households were usually assigned to the second class and the poorer people to the third and fourth classes, each receiving the corresponding clan plot. Thus, the system itself gave the toyons plots of land which were three or four times larger than those of the poorer people. It is true that in return for this the toyons had somewhat greater obligations, but the difference in their extent was extremely small. However, this inequality was by no means the only thing. The toyons actually possessed much more land, having seized it in a variety of different ways. For example, they had several plots, rather than just one, by registering them in the names of their children, workers and so on. It was also the custom to give officials (who were more often than not themselves toyons) additional plots of land, so-called *указ-кургуо* (from the Russian word "ukaz" [edict]), for which, incidentally, there was no payment. The influential toyons also obtained extra plots called ugayy (or kharyy).

175 firm Arai Gumi. The Yakut people took up arms in defense of their young
648 Republic. In March 1923, with the help of the Red Army units, General Pepelyayev was crushed.

175 Even while the struggle against the Pepelyayev bands was still at its
631 height, in December 1922 there was held the first All-Yakut Constituent Assembly of Soviets; this conference elected a Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars of the YaASSR. In 1923 the Constitution of the YaASSR was adopted at the Third All-Yakut Congress of Soviets. In 1937 a new Yakutiyan Constitution was drafted and on March 9 of the same year it was adopted.

Industry and Transportation

433 During the Five-Year Plans a major socialist industry was developed in Yakutiya. At the present time, in addition to the gold, nonferrous metal and mica industries, there are coal, shipbuilding, building-materials, printing and also fish and dairy industries in Yakutiya.

316 Gold was first mined in the regions bordering on Yakutiya (Vitim and Olekma Basins) more than 100 years ago. But in Yakutiya itself the gold was only mined in very small quantities. In 1923 a prospecting party fitted out by the Yakutiyan government, with the help of Yakut guides, discovered the huge gold deposits on the river Aldan. The Aldan immediately became a major gold-mining area. All around the Aldan there arose settlements, mines, and power stations. At the present time the Aldan mines use powerful electrodredges, conveyors, compressors, excavators and haulage machinery.

[317] The salt reserves of Kempendey along the tributary of the Vilyuy are being exploited on a wide scale.

Extensive prospecting has resulted in the discovery of dozens of new coal deposits. There is now a coal industry in Yakutiya. An example of the rapid development of the coal industry in Yakutiya is the Sangarskiy area. Gold was first mined in Sangary in 1928. During the first year of the mine's existence only 15 tons of coal were brought up, operations being conducted entirely by hand. Nowadays the mine is a large, well-equipped industrial enterprise. A mechanized system for loading the coal onto barges has been installed. The construction of houses and cultural facilities on a large scale has begun in the coal-mining regions. [361] Sangary itself has become a miners' settlement and an industrial corner of Yakutiya.

313 Before the advent of the Soviet regime the very rich forest reserves of Yakutiya were hardly touched. The timber rotted where it stood, or else was destroyed by forest fire. At the present time forestry is a leading branch of the Yakut economy. Advanced Soviet machinery is used on a wide scale at the lumber camps. There are mobile power stations, and electric saws with power units. The forestry organizations have been provided with dozens of hauling tractors and trucks. Fully mechanized sectors have been set up. The timer is floated downriver by means of mechanical traction. Sawmills have been built.

47 Hundreds of industrial plants have been set up in Yakutiya during the
178 Soviet period. The manufacture of glass, bricks, building materials, refractory materials, furniture, leatherwares and footwear, provides for local needs.

433 In accordance with the planned development of the economy the Yakut
184 region has been divided up into specialized regions—coal mining in the

southern regions, agriculture and the processing industry in the central part, and reindeer-breeding and trapping in the northern regions.

Particular attention is given in Yakutiya to transportation. The socialist reconstruction of the new Republic began with almost a total lack of roads. The chief means of transportation was always and is still by boat. During the Five-Year Plans the transportation system has undergone a radical reorganization. Whereas in 1917 the entire Lena fleet consisted of 37 outmoded steamers and 113 barges, by the beginning of World War II the Yakut Republic had 127 steamers and more than 500 barges.

Before the Revolution steamer traffic was restricted basically to the upper and lower regions of the Lena as far as the mouth of the Vilyuy. At the present time steamers sail the whole length of the Lena, Vilyuy, Aldan, Olekma, Amga, Chara, and Maya, and all the other major northern rivers.

The development of the Yakut rivers is directly connected with a very important measure adopted by the Soviet government, namely, the opening up of the Northern Seaway, which through the heroic efforts of polar explorers, sailors and fliers has been turned into a permanently operating route. In the 1920's the Vladivostok-Kolyma routes were reopened. In 1932 the icebreaker Sibiryakov made a historic journey by sailing directly and without a stop from Archangel to Vladivostok. The heroic trip made by the Chelyuskin (1933) proved the navigability of the Northern Seaway for conventional-type steamships. In 1936 there was opened a route along the river Yana, in 1937 the Anabar, and in 1938 the Olekma and the Indigirka. The opening up of the Northern Seaway sharply stepped up the carriage of freight to the northern regions of Yakutiya.

The opening up of navigation in northern Yakutiya helped the economic resuscitation of this region. From that time on, the mining and fishing industries began to develop and strengthen. Commodity turnover increased sharply as a result. Coal, timber, salt and food products were delivered to the lower regions of various rivers from Yakutiya. The river routes now being exploited stretch more than 9000 kilometers—almost a quarter of the circumference of the globe.

River traffic has also speeded up. Comfortable double-decker ships of the Volga type run from Osetrovo to Yakutsk, a distance of about 2000 kilometers, in only 5 days.

In 1952 the Lena River Steamship Line acquired new powerful diesel ships of the latest Soviet type.

The Lena River route is now linked to the Siberian Sea artery by a direct railroad line (from Tayshet to Osetrovo docks).

The construction of overland roads has become a matter of nationwide interest in Yakutiya. About 2500 kilometers of permanent highways with winter road camps have been built. The construction and operation of highways have involved tremendous difficulties, such as coping with snowdrifts, ice floes, and ice-covered snow. Of the motor highways linking Yakutiya with the outside world, a particularly important one is the Amur-Yakutsk Highway which connects Aldan, and in winter Yakutsk, with the Ussuriysk railroad.

At the present time freight is brought into Yakutiya by four different routes: The Upper Lena wharves (Kachug, Zhigalovo), the Osetrovo wharf, the Amur-Yakutsk Highway, and the Northern Seaway.

Aviation routes connect Yakutsk with Irkutsk, Krasnoyarsk, Novosibirsk and Moscow. The local lines in operation are Yakutsk-Aldan, Yakutsk-Bulun-Tiksi, etc.

The centuries-old isolation of this region from the chief centers of the country is now a thing of the past. Extensive development has also

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
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trapping season brigades of hunters are equipped with food and ammunition while actually in the field. Traveling agents from the Rural Consumers' Society take the hunters everything they need in the hunting grounds and collect the pelts from them on the spot.

Over the last 30 years a great deal of work has been done to supplement the animals hunted and trapped in the Yakut ASSR. Between 1930 and 1932, 118 specimens of the muskrat, a valuable animal, were brought into the Tokkinskiy Rayon of Yakutiya. It is now found in 32 rayons and has even become acclimatized beyond the Arctic Circle. Over the last few years muskrat shooting has been begun on a systematic basis.

Steps have been taken to replace the reserve of sable. At the present time more than 600 Barguzina sables have been let loose in the forests of Yakutiya. In many parts of the tundra the polar fox is supplied with additional fodder. In the summer, trappers and trapping industry experts carry out careful observation of the conifer harvest and the migration of fur-bearing animals so as to be able to give collective farms an indication of which particular type of hunting they should engage in. The farms make certain that their traps are closed for the summer to prevent needless loss of animals.

In Yakutiya there is also hunting for wild reindeer, elk, wildfowl and waterfowl as a source of food. Hunting is the most profitable commercial branch of the economy in the northern regions. From year to year the material standard of the collective-farm members is increasing, and the high income received from hunting and trapping enables the farmers of the North to supply themselves with food, factory-made clothing and footwear, and, in addition, to acquire commodities of everyday and personal use. Women hunters and trappers have begun appearing in Yakutiya, which is an innovation.

At the present time furs are not only obtained by trapping. Within the Yakut socialist economy, just as in the other regions of the Soviet North, a new branch of economy has sprung up—the breeding of fur-bearing animals in captivity (and, clearly, the most valuable ones). This experiment was begun in the Republic in 1936. Silver-fox farms were set up in Kitcha and Pokrovskoye. In 1956 there were 8 cooperative and 167 collective fur-farms specializing in silver fox in Yakutiya. Hundreds of pedigreed forest animals are kept on the cooperative farms.

The Yakut fish industry began to develop in the 1920's. The Tusbalyk ("salt fish" in the Yakut language) Trust was set up in 1928. During World War II the Yakutgosrybtrest (Yakut State Fish Trust) was set up, combining all the fisheries. Seines, 500-700 meters long, hauled by tractors, appeared at the fisheries. Around-the-year fishing was organized on the lower reaches of the Lena and Yana. A large quantity of fish is procured by the population for personal use. The northern fisheries supplement their equipment during the year by acquiring new seines and barrels and add new ships to their fleets. At the mass-scale fisheries the needs of the workers are provided for by cultural stations. The income of the collective fishermen is increasing. Although local methods of fishing (by boat, by barricading rivers, etc.) are still used, they are becoming more and more amateur methods and are being replaced by modern mechanized techniques.

Collective Farms

Typical examples of the Yakut collective farm are the enlarged Stalin collective farm in the Ordzhonikidzevskiy Rayon of the Kachikatskiy Nasleg

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
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and the Stalin farm in the Megino-Kangalasskiy Rayon. The first of these barely numbered 10 households in the 30's when first organized, but now unites 265 individual households. This collective farm has many different branches. It has 1200 hectares of ploughland, 3000 hectares of meadowland, 2700 hectares of pastureland, and upward of 3000 head of livestock. The collective farm has seven subsidiary farms for dairy-farming, horse-breeding, reindeer-breeding, poultry and pigs. Since 1953, fox and rabbit have been reared on it. The farm has two power stations. The electricity is used for purposes of illumination, threshing and cleaning the seed, grinding grain and sawing wood. An electric milking system for the cows is being introduced.

Well-designed houses, schools and hospitals have been constructed in the collective-farm settlement. It has its own club, library and radio-relay station. A park has been made near the settlement, and there is also a stadium. Films are shown regularly and amateur concerts are often organized.

The Stalin collective farm in the Megino-Kangalasskiy Rayon became the largest collective farm in the Republic as soon as the neighboring collectives merged with it. By government decree, it is the possessor of 67,000 hectares of land, of which 2798 hectares are ploughland, and almost 11,000 constitute meadowland and pastures. The remaining land is taken up by forests. The collective farm sows almost 800 hectares of wheat, 720 hectares of spring and winter rye, more than 250 hectares of oats and bareley, and 55 hectares of vegetables and potatoes. In 1955 there were about 3500 head of cattle on the farm, more than 1200 horses, 250 reindeer, and more than 100 pigs; furthermore, the collective farm has a subsidiary poultry farm and a section for breeding fur-bearing animals.

At the present time the collective farm has three small power stations with a total output of 125 kilowatts. The electricity is used for threshing grain, driving a sawmill and operating lathes. In view of the increased generation of electricity the farm has mechanized the delivery of fodder to the byres. There are more than 500 different types of machines, 6 trucks, 2 passenger cars and 12 engines on the farm.

In 1955, the farm's income was 2,700,000 rubles. The material status of the farmers has been considerably improved.

At the same time their cultural standards have increased.

There is not one single illiterate person on the farm: 120 farmers have a secondary education or higher, 10 of them are studying at universities and 165 in tekhnikums and secondary schools. Many of the collective-farm members return to their own farms after receiving their education.

Great progress has been attained by the northern farms of the Nizhne-Kolymskiy, Bulunskiy, Olenekskiy, Anabarskiy and other rayons. Their achievements are due to the overall reorganization of reindeer-breeding and the trapping industry. On many of the farms there are Yakuts, Evenks, Chukchi and other minorities all working together.

Socialization of the reindeer and the creation of large herds has made it possible to introduce such veterinary measures as stage-by-stage nomadizing based on the rotation of pastureland, inoculations, and day and night guarding of the herds. In the past Yakutiyan reindeer-herders never made use of dogs, which, for example, among the Nentsy make the work of the herdsmen easier. Nowadays reindeer-herding dogs are used extensively in the Nizhne-Kolymskiy, Allaikhovskiy and Bulunskiy Rayons.

The northern collective farms have not confined themselves to the traditional branches of economy, namely, reindeer-breeding, hunting and fishing, and are courageously developing new branches. On most of the

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
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reindeer-breeding collective farms there are now dairy and horse-breeding sections.

The Stalin Even-Yakut collective farm in the Nizhne-Kolymskiy Rayon (formerly known as the Sutanya-Udëran) is successfully developing reindeer-breeding alongside horse-breeding, fishing and hunting. The collective contains more than 17,000 reindeer. In 1955 more than 850 tsentners of such important species of fish as whitefish and baranatka were caught. In 1955, 215,000 rubles worth of furs were delivered to the State. The gross monetary income of this collective farm was 2,430,000 rubles; 1,423,000 rubles were distributed to the collective-farm members for labor units, and for each labor unit the payment was 17 rubles cash, 1.04 kg of meat and 720 g of fish. The monetary income per household averaged 24,000 rubles.

Despite the fact that the chief branches of industry of the northern farms have required periodic migration on the part of the population, all the farms have constructed settlements or collective-farm centers. As an example we can take the settlement of Kolymskaya, the center of the Turvaurgin collective farm. This center contains the headquarters of the farm administration, an incomplete secondary school with boarding facilities, a hospital, a shop, a house of culture with a library, a trading station, a power station, bathhouses, a dairy farm, and 50 standard farmhouses. The farm recently acquired an S30 tractor, a launch and two motorboats. In ethnic composition the Turvaurgin collective farm is multinational and consists of Chukchi, Yukagirs, Yakuts and Evenks.

New Way of Life

A considerable obstacle in the way of the implementation of cultural and public-health program in Yakutiya between 1920 and 1930 was the scattered nature of Yakut settlements due to the ancient occupation of pastoralism. One, two or three yurts together was the predominant type of "settlement." The combining of them into larger units was further required by the everyday farming needs of collective farms.

The construction of settlements under Yakutiyan conditions was a major achievement in socialist reconstruction of the Yakutiyan countryside. It provided an opportunity for installing radio and telephone on the farms and providing them with medical and cultural-educational institutions. In 1950 the construction of settlements in southern Yakutiya was by and large complete. The farm settlements are usually located on elevated riverbanks or by the shores of lakes and consist of several parallel streets. Generally speaking, timber houses rather than yurts are built in these settlements. The center is reserved for the school, collective-farm administrative offices, medical center and club. On many farms yurts are used as work premises. There are quite a few settlements with power stations. In the Megino-Kangalasskiy Rayon alone there are 14 farm power stations with a total output of more than 510 kilowatts. Radio-relay systems have been installed in many of the new settlements. The farmers live in the settlements when they are not out working.

Although several types of farmhouses have been developed, they are still far from perfect. The rigorous climate makes particular demands upon the housing construction in Yakutiya. Special forms of heating are used in the new houses, such as triple frames—the first frame is a single one, while the second is inserted during the winter and has two panes of

55:Popov E-5 (no date) 1964 RV2 Yakut RV2
Dolgan

and Muna on the Lena; the Edzhen group lived on the lower reaches and the Dongot group on the upper reaches of the Olenek. The ancestors of the Karyntuo probably also lived on the Olenek.

Clans with the name Dolgan and Edyan (Edzhen) were commonly found among the Evens and Evenks. For example, Dolgan clans are known in the regions of the Anadyr' and Gizhiga, on the Kamchatka and Okhotsk coast; Edzhen clans are known in the Aldan Basin, around the Ayan on the Okhotsk coast, and so on.

During the 18th century the ancestors of the present-day Dolgans migrated to the northwest, the Dolgan groups moving to the rivers Popigay and Khatanga, the Dongot and Edzhens to the Noril'sk Lakes region, and the Karyntuo to the Boganida River basin. Those left on the Lena became part of the local Yakut naslegs as separate clans.

The first Yakut settlers appeared at the end of the 17th century in the Khatanga Basin on the river Kheta, and from then on the influx continued to increase. In the 18th century these Yakuts formed into the Lower Tundra Yakut Volost.

Even before the Yakuts—at the beginning of the first half of the 17th century—the rivers Pyasina, Dudypta, Boganida, Kheta, and Khatanga were settled by Russian hunters and trappers who founded the ancient Russian population of these places, subsequently known as tundra peasants. They were chiefly concerned with fishing, and to a lesser extent with hunting. It was from them in particular that the Dolgans and Nganasans learned to set pitfall traps for the polar fox. The influence of their Russian neighbors has long been evident in the dwellings and everyday life of the Dolgans, that is to say, during the migration to the Taymyr.

During the 18th and 19th centuries the gap between the culture and everyday life of the different groups of the population in this territory began to narrow. The Yakut language became predominant and was absorbed not only by originally Tungus groups, but also by a large number of tundra peasants. Intermarriage swept away the former barriers between the Evenks, Yakuts and Russians to an ever greater extent.

The system of tsarist administration was no different here from what existed in any other part of Northern Siberia. The Dolgans, Yakuts and Evenks had to pay the fur-tax as "natives" and formed "clans" headed by princelings, while the tundra peasants were forced to pay a poll tax, were formed into a "community" and headed by an elder. People living many hundreds of kilometers away from the nearest centers were economically dependent on the merchants who monopolized supplies to the region, bought up all the furs, and cruelly exploited the population.

Economy and Everyday Life

The main occupations of the Dolgans of the past were reindeer-breeding, hunting, and, in certain regions, fishing. Until quite recently the Dolgans were still leading a nomadic life. Their nomadizing was basically of two types. In the region of the Noril'sk Lakes and in the basin of the Popigay, they retained a more archaic system of nomadizing and did not leave, generally speaking, the forest-tundra belt, but kept to the forest-covered river valleys in the winter, and wandered back to the bare steppes for the summer. The winter camps of other groups of Dolgans stretched along the forest-tundra belt from Lake Pyasino to the lower reaches of the Popigay. These were typical "edge-of-the-forest" dwellers. The winter was spent in the forest-tundra with slight deviations south of the northern boundary of the forest vegetation, while the summer was passed in the tundra,